

The Holocaust and Genocide in History and Politics

A study of the Discrepancy between Human Rights Law and International Politics

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ABSTRACT

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The focus of the dissertation is on the role of the Holocaust in interpreting genocide in international politics. The Holocaust by becoming one of the main influences on morality and ethics in the post-world war world is often seen as a standard to measure good and evil. Consequently, the Holocaust has become an important tool that can be used by the actors of international politics to achieve different rhetorical and practical goals of politics. The dissertation illustrates the way in which the Holocaust is used as the “lens” through which other mass atrocities are interpreted and compared and the consequences this have on the fulfillment of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The central question of the study is *what role has the Holocaust played in the ways that “genocide” has been interpreted in post-war politics?* To answer the question the dissertation examines the development of the Holocaust into its status as the great moral wrongdoing and its relationship to the concept of genocide through out post-war history and politics. The role played by the Holocaust in genocide politics is further emphasized by the case studies of the Cambodian and Rwandan genocide and the usage of the Holocaust in relation to the international community’s responses to the two cases. By the usage of historical method together with elements from discourse analysis the dissertation identifies a Holocaust and genocide discourse in which the different interpretations of the Holocaust enable the international community’s usages of the Holocaust as a political tool. Thus the different understandings of the Holocaust have not solely determined how the international community have interpreted genocidal incidents, but rather been used in the rhetorical justifications of the international community’s chosen responses to the two cases of the study. Consequently, this has had the result that the different Holocaust interpretations have been used for the same purpose that of fulfilling the international community’s interests in relation to different genocidal incidents. The study concludes that the Holocaust have been used to uphold a norm of non-intervention in relation to cases of genocide in international politics as the international community have lacked a political will to prevent incidents of this kind.

Keywords: The Holocaust, Genocide, Genocide Convention, Discourse, International law, International Politics, Implementation, Applicability, United Nations